

Reliable Education Sources for Drugs and Medical Conditions

It can be a challenge to find credible sources of information when you want to know more about your health. A good place to start your search is to look for websites that end in .edu, .gov or .org as these websites are from educational institutions, governments or non-profit organizations. We have compiled a summary of sources that are available to you that we recommend when searching for more information about your medications and/or medical condition(s).

Websites

1. **Mayo Clinic** (www.mayoclinic.org) – This is a reputable source for health information. It has a wide range of information about diseases, drugs and supplements.
2. **Healthline Online** (www.health.gov.sk.ca/healthline-online) – Use interactive tools to learn more about your health and search for your health related question using the search function.
3. **Medline Plus** (www.medlineplus.com) - Information about medical conditions, prescription and non-prescription medication and herbal supplements (including videos, interactive tutorials and even games).
4. **Health Canada** (<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dhp-mps/index-eng.php>) - Find up to date information on drugs and health products, recalls, safety alerts and other medication information.
5. **HerbMed** (www.herbmed.org) - A database that has free access to the 20 most popular herbs. You can access their whole herb database at an additional cost.
6. **National (US) Centre for Complementary and Alternative Medicine** (www.nccam.nih.gov) provides reliable, evidence-based information about complementary health products and practices.
7. **Quackwatch** (www.quackwatch.org) – Aimed at providing information to consumers on health-related frauds, myths, fads and misconducts. The purpose of this site is to promote quality health information and advise consumers of misleading advertising on the internet.
8. **Pharmacy Association of Saskatchewan** (www.skpharmacists.ca/patients) – Learn more about what your pharmacist can do for you.

Healthcare professionals

In addition to your family doctor there are other healthcare professionals available to you who will be able to address your drug related questions or concerns:

1. **Your community pharmacist** - You can call your pharmacist with questions or go in to see them in person. It is always best to talk to the pharmacy that regularly fills your prescriptions.
2. **medSask** (www.medsask.usask.ca) - A team of pharmacists are available to provide evidence-based information to answer your medication or medication therapy questions for prescription, over-the-counter (OTC) and herbal products. You can ask your questions on-line or by phone. Call 1-800-665-DRUG (3784).
3. **HealthLine** – this is a confidential, 24-hr health information and support telephone line that is staffed by Registered Nurses, Registered Psychiatric Nurses and Social Workers. This line can be used for non-urgent health advice and support. Dial 811 to access this service.

Unreliable Sources For Medical Information

There are many sources for medical information that should NOT be used to answer your medical questions. These sources typically do not have sufficient evidence to support their information or have a hidden agenda when presenting health information. Before acting on any health advice received from an Internet source, always check with a health care professional first (see list on previous page). Here are some of the more common resources that you should avoid for medical advice.

1. **Television / radio talk shows** – Health related TV or radio talk shows (such as The Dr. Oz show) often will provide exaggerated and inaccurate information that is not always supported by quality evidence. ALWAYS talk to your health professional before following any advice you hear on TV or the radio (even if it is a doctor or a pharmacist who is providing the information)
2. **eHealthMe** (www.ehealthme.com)- This website can be misleading when looking of health related information. It reports single personal experiences from individuals on various medications or with medical conditions. These experiences are from the patient’s perspective and have not necessarily been analyzed or confirmed by healthcare professionals to ensure the validity of the statements.
3. **Natural Health Information Articles by Dr. Joseph Mercola** (www.mercola.com) - Any health site that is attempting to sell health and drug products to consumers poses potentially biased medical information. His articles also make unsubstantiated claims that oppose medical and health organizations. In general, if a website is offering to sell you any product, there is a good chance the information about the product is biased.
4. **Drugs.com** (www.drugs.com) – This site has information on specific drugs and has a tool where you can check for medication interactions. However, there is a lot of information and it can be overwhelming. If you use this site, do not make any changes to your treatment without consulting with your health care professional. This is an American website, therefore some information may not apply to Canadian standards. Avoid the advertisement links as they may not be reliable sources of information. The questions and answers section is not monitored by healthcare professionals and the information posted should not be considered reliable.
5. **Ask the Doctor** (www.askthedoctor.com)
6. **The Doctors’ Medical Library** (www.medical-library.net)

Recommended Resources for Common Medical Conditions

There are many resources for common medical conditions available. Use the list below for a good start to your search if you have recently been diagnosed with a chronic condition or would like to understand it more fully.

Medical Condition/topic	Resource	Description
Hypertension(high blood pressure)	www.hypertension.ca	Hypertension Canada
Diabetes	www.diabetes.ca www.guidelines.diabetes.ca	The Canadian Diabetes Association Canadian Diabetes guidelines
Chronic pain	www.canadianpaincoalition.ca www.cirpd.org	Canadian Pain Coalition Canadian Institute for the Relief of Pain and Disability
Osteoporosis	www.osteoporosis.ca	Osteoporosis Canada
Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disorder (COPD)	www.lung.ca	The Lung Association – to find the COPD section, go to “Lung diseases” and then select “COPD”
Insomnia/Sleeping difficulties	www.sleepeducation.com	Sleep Education by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine
Asthma	www.asthma.ca	Asthma Society of Canada The Lung Association – to find the Asthma section, go to “Lung diseases” and then select “Asthma”
Warfarin use (to prevent blood clots)	www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthtopics/	HealthLinkBC health topics A-Z – to find information about Warfarin, select “W” and browse through the health topics to find information about Warfarin